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Condado Tacos Review – Tacos Without Breaking the Bank

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One of the biggest complaints we hear about taco joints in Pittsburgh is that they are, for lack of a better term, overpriced. Throw in the premium of downtown Pittsburgh and it is pretty fair to say that you have a hard time getting a decent taco in the area without breaking the bank.

So when Condado Tacos, a Columbus-based budget taco restaurant, invited us to check out their first Pittsburgh location right in the heart of downtown, you knew we had to go. Thankfully, we have to say that this one comes in to fill that void with more appealing prices, roughly \$3-\$4 per taco, meaning you could walk away with a full meal for under \$15 per person quite easily.

When it comes to restaurant dining in downtown Pittsburgh, *we'll call that a win.*

Budget Friendly Tacos in Downtown Pittsburgh



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This restaurant operates under a build-your-own taco concept, much like a sit-down version of Chipotle (as described by my waiter). But where most restaurants of this style have a simple formula of shell plus protein plus toppings, Condado Tacos goes one step further with so many options that it would be impossible to even get close to trying them all.

Although my waiter was very happy to recommend the build-your-own concept, I decided to opt for three tacos from the recommendations menu to get to know their tried and true flavor profiles. To make an already massive order even larger, I also added on a side of the chorizo cheese dip and two margaritas just for fun.

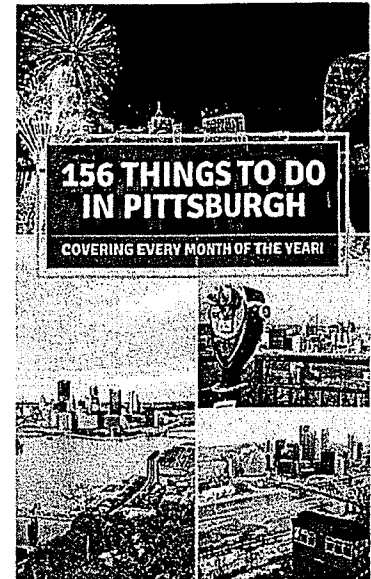
Margaritas are a Prime Focus



Before getting into the food, I have to highlight the fact that Condado Tacos is on a quest to be the "it" place in Pittsburgh for margaritas. With dozens upon dozens of tequilas, keg-prepped margarita mix on tap, and numerous flavor mixers ready to go, you truly can order a number of margaritas here without even making a dent in the list- just like the tacos.

I sampled two margaritas, their regular as well as a blood orange margarita, which were a bit on the sweet side for me as I, unfortunately, always go a bit too heavy on the tequila when making my own. But for \$6 for a basic flavored margarita I certainly see many more in my future.

If you were to go for a margarita with a premium tequila, however, I would probably ask them if it would be possible to make the mixers by hand to cut out the sweetness a touch and let the tequila flavor shine through.



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That quick margarita critique aside, we really should talk about the food.

A Massive Taco Feast

To say that I over-ordered from the food menu would be an understatement as the creamy cheese dip appetizer order was enough to fill me up while I waited for my tacos to arrive (which were a bit slow due to an opening night glitch I'll get into a little bit later).

When my tacos arrived, I was greeted with the sight of three fully loaded tacos about the size I would make at home myself (read: *large*). The three choices I opted for were The Mantis (a double-decker style shell topped with jackfruit, onions, tomato, cheese, and mango habanero sauce), the Bubba Kush (another double-decker style shell topped with smoked cheddar, pulled pork, jicama, onions, pineapple salsa, and a delicious jackfruit BBQ sauce), and the Surf N' Turf (a soft flour shell topped with ghost pepper marinated steak, rice, queso fresco, house shrimp ceviche, lettuce, onions, roja salsa, and "dirty" sauce).

As you can tell by the number of toppings listed, I would've probably been just set with one protein and a few vegetables on top, but this restaurant certainly doesn't skimp when it comes to loading it all in.

The tacos themselves do have a sense of familiarity to me, as some of the flavors are reminiscent of what I'd build at home, but to a more over-the-top degree that I certainly won't complain about (I'd never have that many toppings available at one go even for a massive party). The stand-out by far was the Bubba Kush as the flavor profile is quite unlike any taco I've ever had, and is one that I desperately wanted to finish immediately.

But after just a few bites of each I was stuffed and begging for a doggy bag to go.

Then the glitch happened that I mentioned above.

To make a long story short, the waiters thought that my order got lost, which is something I can easily look over on an opening preview night as we've certainly had far worse things happen over the years. Very quickly they asked me to fill out another order card, and within minutes my taco order came out as it should've. But, by the time I finished, another taco order came out as well, meaning I went home with three full tacos **plus** three half tacos with the compliments of the house.

Suffice it to say, I was in taco heaven, and this was probably the most fortuitous mistake I've ever experienced in a restaurant (and hey, another Bubba Kush for me to enjoy later!). But sadly, I do not think you should count on this happening to you as the glitches like this will get worked out very, very soon as this restaurant claims its foothold in the downtown restaurant scene.

A Return Visit for the Firecracker Shell

In early 2018, Condado Tacos released a new spicy shell called the Firecracker and naturally we had to make a return trip to check it out.

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This one is a hard corn shell that is covered with a mix of spices that gives it a hot and smokey kick. If other certain taco joints have shells covered in spices from a famous chip company, think of this one as what would happen if it was taken to the next level with a spicy kick.

The best part about this particular shell is that you can order it as part of their double shell tacos (like the Sweet Lucy) from their "secret menu" for just about 50 cents more. Be sure to try this one as it really does a great job amplifying the flavors of the tacos!

Overall, Condado Tacos is a solid restaurant in downtown Pittsburgh for tacos. They're not authentic Mexican by any

means, but they are cheap and delicious- and in a part of town that could sorely use this addition, we welcome them with open arms!

We'd like to thank Condado Tacos for inviting us out to enjoy the restaurant during their opening preview night and for the gift card giveaway. As always, all opinions are our own.

Condado Tacos is located at 971 Liberty Avenue in Downtown Pittsburgh.

For more taco joints in Pittsburgh, check out tako, Smoke Taqueria, Bull River Taco, Doce Taqueria, La Palapa, Baby Loves Tacos, and Las Palmas!

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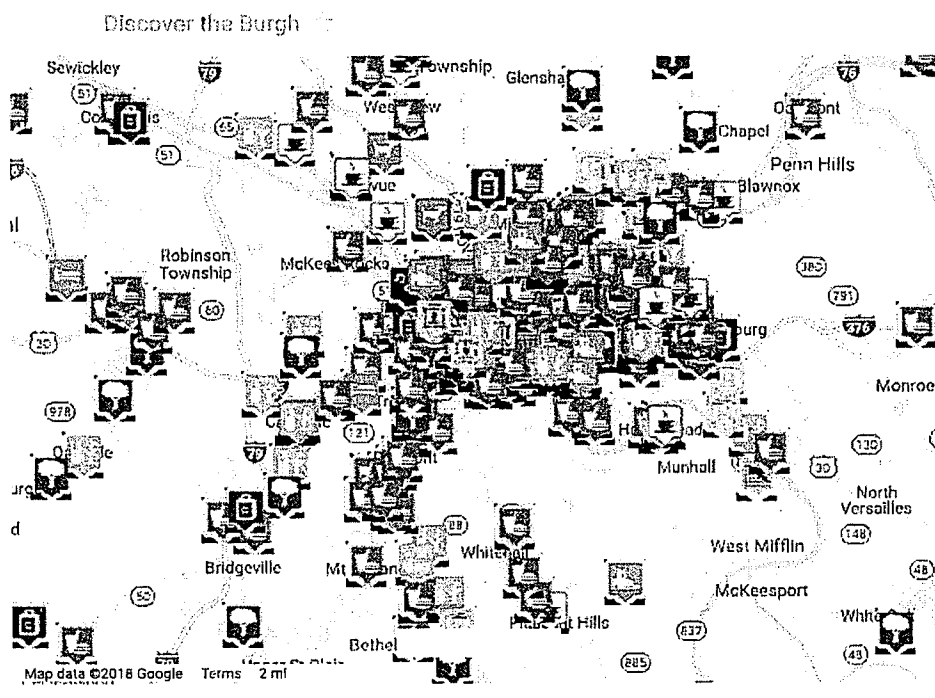
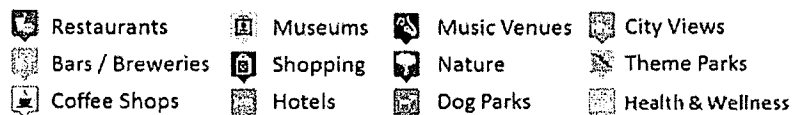
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